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Summary record of the 24th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 6 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
later: Mr. Burity (Vice-Chair) ..... (Angola)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of Vitaly I. Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

1. On behalf of the Committee, **the Chair** paid tribute to the memory of Vitaly I. Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations.

2. *At the invitation of the Chair, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

3. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) expressed appreciation for the tribute paid to the memory of Vitaly I. Churkin.

Organization of work (A/C.5/71/L.22)

4. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the proposed tentative and provisional programme of work for the first part of the resumed seventy-first session, prepared on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/71/22).

5. **Mr. Sevilla Borja** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was committed to thorough consideration of all agenda items. Delegations should engage in a spirit of compromise to reach a common outcome in the best interests of the Organization and the Member States. Deferring decision-making on problematic issues did not reflect well on the Committee. The Group was concerned at the status of documentation for the resumed session. Despite noticeable improvements, the late issuance of important reports was a chronic problem. Reports must be issued in a timely manner in all languages, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to facilitate the Committee's deliberations and ensure that important subjects received due attention. The progress made in recent years should not inspire complacency but encourage all concerned to do even better.

6. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the leadership shown by the Secretary-General, who should assist Member States in the implementation of essential initiatives endorsed by the main bodies of the United Nations, ensure that the Secretariat was more transparent, efficient and representative, and apply the principle of equitable geographical distribution. All the matters in the proposed programme of work were of great importance to the Group, in particular the accountability system in the Secretariat, procurement, the modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), the construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, the resident coordinator system, information and communications technology (ICT), standards of accommodation for air travel, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and after-service health insurance. The Group appreciated the effort put into the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on procurement activities in the United Nations Secretariat (A/71/681) and gave high priority to improving opportunities for vendors from developing countries.

7. The Group would ensure that the Committee's discussion of accountability resulted in a more efficient Organization. Member States would always cooperate with an effective and transparent Secretariat. An adequate response to the lessons learned in relation to UNMEER was required; global coordination, prevention mechanisms, the capacities of local authorities and communication tools must be improved. The Committee must complete its tasks within the allotted time and negotiations should be conducted in good faith as part of the intergovernmental process. Parallel meetings should be avoided, since small delegations, including most members of the Group, were unable to attend more than one meeting at a time. The facilitators must avoid closed negotiations in small configurations.

8. **Mr. Funes Henríquez** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, said that the proposed programme of work contained matters of great importance to the Community, including the programme budget implications of the draft resolution on modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/71/L.58), accountability, procurement and standards of accommodation for air travel. The Committee should consider the programme budget implications of the draft resolution as soon as possible, since the preparatory work would start in March 2017. Accountability must be enhanced to improve the administrative and budgetary functioning of the Organization. The Community welcomed the report of JIU for 2016 and programme of work for 2017 (A/71/34) and reiterated that the Unit must remain independent. The Member States had proved at the main part of the current session that, when the political will existed, even the most complicated tasks could be completed in good time.

9. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia and the Republic of Moldova, said that the States members of the European Union supported the Secretary-General's call for a more efficient United Nations. Simplification, decentralization, flexibility, compliance, transparency and accountability were essential, and resources should be devoted to substantive activities to make the Organization more effective. The timely issuance of documentation in all languages was essential to inclusivity in the Committee's work. The Bureau should engage with those responsible for document production and with the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to ensure that the work of the Fifth Committee was not hampered by delayed documentation. The Committee should manage its time better so that it reached decisions by consensus during normal working hours.

10. The Committee had before it important matters, some deferred from previous sessions. Senior managers must be held accountable for mandate fulfilment, risk assessment and resource use. The ICT strategy was essential to improving the effectiveness of the Organization. Procurement rules should be transparent and potential vendors should be able to compete to offer the best value for money through the latest technology, in line with the principles of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. The environmental footprint of the United Nations must be reduced. The States members of the European Union would work with other Member States to enhance the contribution of JIU. The Committee must resolve the financing of the resident coordinator system, particularly in light of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

11. **Mr. Fu** Daopeng (China) said that the Committee must support the implementation of United Nations mandates while enhancing efficiency. The Secretariat should strengthen internal management, respect budgetary discipline and put Member States' contributions to good use. The Committee once again faced the problem of the late submission of documentation; the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee should coordinate so that documents were circulated as early as possible.

12. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that progress towards an accountability system, the financing of after-service health insurance, the ICT strategy and standards of accommodation for air travel were of particular importance to his delegation. The Secretariat must diversify the origin of goods and services to encourage developing countries to participate in procurement. The Committee should ensure that the resources for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration were provided in a timely manner. To ensure that the preparatory process for the negotiations was inclusive and started in March 2017, stakeholders should give high priority to the related analysis and decision-making. The challenges faced by the international community required coordinated action by delegations. Member States must use all forums to preserve multilateralism as a means of reaching agreements and show that it was the best way of solving common problems. They should respond to the threat of misguided nationalism with more dialogue and better decisions, for the benefit of the Organization.

13. **Ms. Connelly** (United States of America) said that the Committee should ensure that the reform initiatives approved by the Member States succeeded. It should approve the resources necessary for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1874 (2009) to perform their mandates. The Committee's discussion of the contingency fund should result in better fiscal discipline at the United Nations. Her delegation would seek to make further progress in the reform of ICT, procurement, accountability and standards of accommodation for air travel.

14. Cost containment depended on access to information in real time, and she welcomed the inclusion in the Secretary-General's report on the status of implementation of the ICT strategy for the United Nations (A/71/400) of a five-year budget projection that included peacekeeping. The Secretary-General should adjust the planning assumptions to refine the cost projections as the strategy was implemented. Although Secretariat-wide compliance with the strategy was a challenge, coordination between the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Field Support had improved. The Secretary-General should provide the Committee with indicators of progress and benefits, based on performance metrics, and his next progress report should contain detailed

updates on the implementation of the strategy by all Secretariat entities. JIU, whose fraud detection mechanisms were essential in safeguarding the Organization, had made recommendations on fraud and had drawn attention to challenges related to administrative support services and service centres.

15. **Mr. Imada** (Japan) said that the Committee had before it such important matters as special political missions, revised estimates for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic and the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58, but must nonetheless complete its work within the allotted time. Documents should be submitted in a timely manner, in accordance with resolution 70/247, so that the Committee could conduct its discussions responsibly.

16. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that the Secretary-General's report on procurement activities (A/71/681) deserved close attention. General Assembly resolution 69/273 contained instructions regarding the analysis of various bidding methods in aviation service procurement and the need for clarification related to the implementation of environmentally safe and sustainable procurement in the Organization. His delegation concluded that the related tasks had not been performed, since the information was not provided in the report. It was concerned that certain procurement initiatives were being implemented without clear criteria, indicators of economic effectiveness or evidence that they resulted in savings.

17. The implementation of the ICT strategy should continue, in line with the General Assembly decisions on the matter. ICT systems should be less fragmented and costly and their efficiency should be increased, including through the abandonment of obsolete or redundant software. The five-year projection of the budget allocation for such technology should be refined. The progress in establishing an accountability system left much to be desired; given the importance of the matter, the Committee should discuss it annually. Since the Secretary-General's report on managing after-service health insurance (A/71/698) contained no evidence that the cumulative approach was better than the current pay-as-you-go system, the matter should be further examined; it would be premature to take any decisions on it at present. In the discussions related to the report of JIU (A/71/34), his delegation would maintain its principled position of supporting the activities and paying close attention to the reports and recommendations of the Unit, which should receive the resources it needed to perform its mandate.

18. **The Chair** said that she took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that it would be adjusted as necessary to make best use of available time as the first part of the resumed session progressed.

19. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 115: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/71/101/Rev.1/Add.1) (*continued*)

20. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to a note by the Secretary-General (A/71/101/Rev.1/Add.1) informing the General Assembly of the resignation of Mr. Omaish (Jordan) from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, effective 10 February 2017. The Government of Jordan had nominated Mr. Hyassat, whose candidature had been endorsed by the Group of Asia-Pacific States, to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office, which would expire on 31 December 2018.

21. *Mr. Hyassat (Jordan) was recommended by acclamation for appointment to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment by the General Assembly and expiring on 31 December 2018.*

Agenda item 140: Joint Inspection Unit (A/71/34, A/71/34/Corr.1 and A/71/779)

22. **Mr. Kramer** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of JIU for 2016 and programme of work for 2017 (A/71/34), said that the Unit sought to draw on its unique, system-wide perspective to deliver results that responded to the needs of a broad range of participating organizations, which required that it maintain a diverse portfolio of reviews. As reflected in the work completed in 2016 and envisaged for 2017, the Unit was focusing on strengthening the framework for promoting integrity in United Nations system organizations and on achieving a more balanced emphasis in its workload between management-related and programmatic issues, particularly in support of development objectives and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while maintaining adequate capacity to conduct detailed reviews of individual organizations.

23. The Unit had issued 10 system-wide reports and 1 report covering a single organization, including a

report on the support provided by the United Nations system for small island developing States; a report on fraud prevention, detection and response that contained a specific and actionable framework to promote integrity and accountability in United Nations system organizations; a review of the audit function; and an examination of knowledge management arrangements in the system. JIU had also carried out independent system-wide evaluations of aspects of operational activities for development, which had required it to engage in new forms of collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, made possible by innovative funding arrangements. He hoped that the recently issued report on administrative support services and the role of service centres would inform the Committee's consideration of the implementation of a global service delivery model. As reflected in a series of management letters, JIU had engaged in dialogue with participating organizations and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) that had focused on the high number of recommendations made by the Unit, as well as measures that participating organizations could take to increase the rate of acceptance and implementation of those recommendations.

24. The Unit's programme of work for 2017 included five new system-wide studies focusing on, inter alia, strengthening integrity and accountability and supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also included a review of whistle-blower protection policies and two system-wide reviews carried over from 2016 relating to donor-led reviews and travel policies, respectively. In line with the horizontal approach to cooperation demanded by the 2030 Agenda, JIU would draw on the comparative advantages afforded by its system-wide perspective and independence to carry out complex projects; develop a programme of work that addressed current challenges; and implement working procedures that reinforced quality requirements at each stage of the reporting cycle.

25. Efforts must be made to resolve the long-standing issue of funding for the maintenance of the JIU website and web-based system for tracking the acceptance and implementation of recommendations, for which no budgetary resources had been allocated. The lack of flexibility in the JIU budget made it impossible to accommodate even relatively insignificant non-staff costs. The General Assembly should resolve the matter by requesting the Secretary-General to provide the relevant services or to include the related requirements in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

26. While the General Assembly had traditionally provided strong support for the work of JIU, specific consideration of its reports had declined in recent years. He therefore hoped that the Assembly would request a review of that situation and welcomed the Committee's consideration of two JIU reports at the current session.

27. **Mr. Herman** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the report of JIU for 2016 (A/71/779), said that CEB remained dedicated to assisting the Unit in performing its critical functions. In accordance with the statute of JIU, the CEB secretariat played a key role in compiling and transmitting the comments of the Secretary-General and United Nations system organizations on the Unit's system-wide reports and was committed to ensuring the timely issuance of the related notes of the Secretary-General. Owing to its close partnership with the secretariat of the Unit, CEB received JIU reports shortly after publication, and its efforts to elicit more prompt responses to requests for comments from participating organizations were contributing to a more effective preparation process. It was also increasingly common for the CEB secretariat to work closely with JIU inspectors during the preparation of draft reports in order to ensure a more comprehensive outcome reflecting broad-based agreement.

28. The Unit's increasing focus on system-wide issues had led to closer collaboration between CEB and JIU, to which the CEB secretariat contributed within its limited capacities. In addition, each year, CEB solicited suggestions from agencies for projects to be incorporated in the Unit's programme of work and proposed topics for its consideration. Moreover, in 2016, the Secretary-General had, once again, participated in a consultative capacity in the selection of inspectors to fill vacancies in the Unit.

29. The ongoing dialogue between the secretariats of CEB and JIU had greatly improved mutual cooperation in pursuit of a stronger and more cohesive United Nations system. The Secretary-General would continue to strengthen the Board's close working relationship with JIU, particularly in the light of measures taken to enhance the Unit's system-wide focus and the monitoring of and follow-up on the implementation of system-wide recommendations.

30. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that JIU played a key role in supporting Member States' efforts to enhance the Organization's efficiency, functioning and ability to fulfil its mandates.

31. The Group attached great importance to realizing maximum benefits and efficiencies from the auditing and review activities of JIU, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Board of Auditors. It would therefore seek further information on efforts to enhance coordination among those bodies, particularly with regard to their programmes of work, with a view to reducing overlap in their functions.

32. The system-wide reports of JIU completed in 2016 provided actionable recommendations that would enhance the effectiveness of participating organizations in fulfilling their mandates. In that connection, the Group looked forward to examining the review of the acceptance and implementation of the Unit's recommendations by participating organizations, with a view to improving the efficiency of its work and its impact on the United Nations system. Following the appointment of the new Executive Secretary of the Unit in 2017, the Group would also examine how JIU resources were deployed and the need to enhance the expertise currently available in the secretariat to allow the Unit to carry out its mandate.

33. The best practices of some organizations, including the International Telecommunication Union, in following up on the implementation of the Unit's recommendations should be emulated and shared, with a view to achieving specific outcomes aimed at improving the performance of participating entities. The Group would also seek further information on the reasons for the low rate of implementation of recommendations in single-organization reports and how to reverse that trend. It welcomed the diversity of projects envisaged for 2017, particularly those related to the 2030 Agenda, and looked forward to the Unit's recommendations in that regard.

34. A well-functioning, reliable web-based system for tracking recommendations with accurate, up-to-date information on the status of implementation must be maintained. The Group regretted the limited progress achieved in that regard and would explore options to provide sustainable and predictable funding for the operation and maintenance of the system using in-house expertise, in line with the requests contained in paragraphs 107 and 13 of General Assembly resolutions 70/247 and 70/257, respectively. Taking note of the reported decline in the consideration of JIU reports, the Group would seek ways to improve the Assembly's approach with a view to capitalizing on the work of the Unit.

35. **Mr. Sánchez Azcuy** (Cuba) requested that officials from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Office of Information and Communications Technology should be present during informal consultations on the current agenda item to provide further clarification with regard to the unfulfilled requests of the Assembly referred to in paragraphs 66 and 67 of the JIU report (A/71/34).

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (continued)

Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels (continued): Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (A/71/365/Add.8, A/71/365/Add.8/Corr.1 and A/71/595/Add.8)

Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017: United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic (A/71/761 and A/71/811)

36. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council under thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (A/71/365/Add.8 and A/71/365/Add.8/Corr.1), said that in August 2015 the Security Council had adopted resolution 2235 (2015), establishing the Mechanism for a period of one year. The mandate had been extended until 31 October 2016 in accordance with a letter dated 21 September 2016 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/807); accordingly, no resources had been included in the revised appropriation approved by the General Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017. By resolutions 2314 (2016) and 2319 (2016), however, the Council had further extended the mandate until 16 November 2017. As a result, the Secretary-General, in his report, proposed resources amounting to $3,278,800, which would provide for a staffing complement of 26 positions, for the period from 1 November 2016 to 16 November 2017. Pending the Assembly's decision on the proposal, the requirements for the period from 1 November 2016 to 31 March 2017, amounting to $961,900, had been funded under the Secretary-

General's commitment authority for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. That amount was included in the appropriation requested in paragraph 19 (b) of the report.

37. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 under sections 27, Humanitarian assistance, and 36, Staff assessment, for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic (A/71/761), she said that the Mechanism had been established under Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) to monitor cross-border humanitarian operations of the United Nations and its partners in the Syrian Arab Republic. No resources for the implementation of the mandate, subsequently extended until 10 January 2017, had been included in the revised appropriation approved by the General Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017. By resolution 2332 (2016), the Council had further extended the mandate until 10 January 2018. The report contained the proposed resources for the Mechanism for the period until December 2017, amounting to $3,890,000 which would provide for a staffing complement of 42 temporary positions and would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

38. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the estimates under thematic cluster II for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (A/71/595/Add.8), said that the $93,000 proposed for staff costs for the final two months of 2016 were not part of the Mechanism's estimated requirements for 2017 and that the requirements for operational costs should have been better justified. The Advisory Committee nevertheless recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for 2017.

39. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the revised estimates for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic related to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/71/811), he said that, with a slight reduction in the operational costs and the application of higher vacancy rates to reflect the operational realities facing the Mechanism, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the resources proposed by the Secretary-General. It looked forward to the savings that would result from the relocation of the Office of the Chief closer to the operations of the Mechanism.

40. The Advisory Committee noted that the proposed revised estimates had been issued once the new mandate period was already under way. Because another yearly renewal was expected at the end of 2017, the resources for the Mechanism should be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. He recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/236, had noted with concern the piecemeal approach taken to the budget process and had requested the Secretary-General to provide the fullest possible presentation in programme budgets of the resource requirements of the Organization.

41. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, with regard to the Secretary-General's report on the estimates for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (A/71/365/Add.8 and A/71/365/Add.8/Corr.1), his Government condemned the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. The Syrian Arab Republic had acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention because it believed in ridding the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, while emphasizing States' right to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Syrian Arab Republic, during its membership of the Security Council in 2003, had drafted a resolution that the United States and other Western countries had threatened to veto to protect the nuclear arsenal of Israel.

42. Since the start of the Syrian crisis, his Government had repeatedly warned of the threat of the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups and had sent 87 letters to the Security Council, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Joint Investigative Mechanism and other Security Council counter-terrorism committees regarding the provision by certain Governments of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals to armed terrorist groups in Syria. Those bodies' deliberate failure to respond to the use of chemical weapons against civilians in Syria and Iraq by terrorist groups was a gross violation of Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions, in particular resolution 1540 (2004). His Government, which was committed to transparency, had provided all the necessary facilities to international investigators since 2014, as well as scientific evidence and witness statements that proved that the terrorist groups had fabricated those incidents.

43. His delegation rejected the allegations made in recent reports of the Mechanism. The Mechanism had produced no material evidence of the use of chlorine

gas, and its working methods had resulted in technically and legally flawed conclusions that lacked objectivity. The authors had been put under pressure to reflect the interests of countries known for their hostility to Syria.

44. The Mechanism should be funded entirely from the regular budget rather than from the Mechanism's trust fund, which, since it relied on voluntary contributions, would be used in a politicized manner, without General Assembly oversight. The resolutions that had established the Mechanism and extended its mandate had not referred directly to the budget because the Mechanism, as a body established by the Security Council, should be financed from the regular budget. The Syrian Arab Republic had repeatedly warned of the consequences for the credibility of the United Nations and related international entities of politicizing the matter under pressure from certain Western Governments that sponsored terrorism, particularly given that those countries had announced the results of the investigation before the Mechanism had issued its report and their representatives had made inflammatory statements against Syria. Some of those countries were involved in supplying toxic chemicals to armed terrorist groups in Syria, planning the use of those chemicals as weapons against Syrian civilians and military personnel, or concealing the transfer of such chemicals from neighbouring countries. His Government had honoured its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention and had rid Syria of chemical weapons.

45. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, with regard to the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, his Government reaffirmed its principled position regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance to the rightful beneficiaries without discrimination, in line with its Constitution. Syria would cooperate with the United Nations in accordance with the Organization's guiding principles on the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance, in particular respect for national sovereignty, the role of the affected State in supervising the distribution of assistance in its territory, and the principles of neutrality, impartiality and non-politicization. The Secretary-General's report on the estimates for the Mechanism (A/71/761) ignored the real causes of the humanitarian crisis, the proliferation of terrorist groups financed by Governments known to all, and the fact that, in meeting 75 per cent of humanitarian needs in the country, the Syrian Government had assumed its responsibilities towards its citizens despite the unilateral coercive measures taken against it. The large sums mentioned in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee would be better used to increase the proportion of assistance provided through international organizations working in Syria in cooperation with the Syrian Government, the effectiveness of which was proven, unlike the initiatives taken by the United Nations under Security Council resolutions.

46. His Government rejected the Secretary-General's promotion of cross-border assistance, which was ineffective and mostly fell into the hands of armed terrorist groups, thereby increasing pressure on those in need. The promotion of cross-border vaccination operations had cost the lives of many Syrian children through spoiled vaccines or vaccination by non-specialists. His delegation objected to the report's description of the situation in Syria as a conflict and requested the Secretary-General to issue an official correction and in the future to use the term "crisis", which reflected the fact that Syria was facing a terrorist war supported by countries from the region and beyond. The figures used in the report were estimates taken from the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan and did not reflect the reality of humanitarian operations in Syria. The notifications sent to his Government did not meet the minimum standard of credibility with regard to figures, data, number of beneficiaries and information regarding the parties that received and distributed assistance to civilian beneficiaries. His Government rejected the assertion in the report that the Mechanism had monitored and confirmed the humanitarian nature of all consignments without incident or complaint. The report did not take into account the complaints and observations of his Government, which was primarily responsible for the entry of assistance into the country, regarding the Mechanism's inability to verify that cross-border assistance had reached those who needed it; the Secretary-General's latest report on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016) (S/2017/144) had confirmed that terrorist groups had seized cross-border humanitarian convoys travelling to Idlib governorate.

47. The Secretary-General's report on the Mechanism (A/71/761) did not reflect the readiness of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to monitor the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the rightful beneficiaries. His Government objected to the reference in the report to administrative hurdles that hampered such delivery, because the mandate of the Mechanism did not include the delivery of assistance in unstable regions of Syria. The United Nations should not, as the Secretary-

General did in the report, describe the unauthorized groups with which it worked in such regions as "local authorities". The objective and the expected accomplishments set out in the report did not fall under the mandate of the Mechanism. The Secretariat was promoting the Mechanism as part of a media campaign to support cross-border work administered by organizations based in neighbouring countries, even though that work had clearly failed and the audit reports on the accounts of those organizations revealed deep corruption. Financial resources should not be allocated to the Mechanism, which should be replaced by a system under which assistance was provided from within Syria in coordination with his Government. The existence of such mechanisms ran counter to the Charter of the United Nations, since it flagrantly violated the sovereignty and independence of States and constituted intervention in their domestic affairs.

48. **Ms. Aşık** (Turkey), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that her delegation categorically denied the baseless allegation made by the representative of another Member State regarding the Mechanism. The Committee should not be used to politicize or divert attention from the issues at hand. In Syria, hundreds of thousands of lives had been lost and 12 million people had been displaced, a humanitarian catastrophe by any definition. Turkey had assumed more than its fair share of the burden by protecting more than 3 million Syrians who had fled their homeland. It now harboured more refugees than any other country. As the Secretary-General's report stated, millions of Syrians had received food, health supplies and other relief because of the increase in the number of United Nations cross-border humanitarian shipments to Syria. Her Government had cooperated with the Mechanism from the beginning. It worked on behalf of the Syrian people in cooperation with international organizations, in full view of the international community. As the conflict entered its seventh year, international assistance to those trapped in Syria must be increased.

49. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had not mentioned the role of neighbouring countries in his statement. The Committee was not the appropriate forum to discuss the role of Turkey in financing armed terrorist groups in his country. What he had referred to were reports and figures mentioned in the Humanitarian Response Plan, which demonstrated the ineffectiveness of cross-border assistance. The international community was wasting money on a mechanism whose sole purpose was to put political pressure on his Government. The vast disparity in the figures relating to the cross-border assistance delivered through the Mechanism and through the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria revealed the veracity of his comments. Financial and commercial corruption had been revealed in the Mechanism's office in Turkey. He called on the Committee to reconsider the work and effectiveness of the Mechanism.

Coordination activities of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (A/70/737 and A/71/810)

50. **Mr. Carey** (Director, Facilities and Commercial Services Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the lessons learned exercise on the coordination activities of UNMEER (A/70/737), said that UNMEER had been established by General Assembly resolution 69/1 as the Organization's first ever emergency health mission, in response to a joint appeal from the Presidents of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone for coordinated international support for nationally-led efforts to respond to the unprecedented Ebola outbreak. The lessons learned exercise had been conducted jointly between the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the International Peace Institute in response to a request contained in General Assembly resolution 69/274 B. The findings of the exercise had highlighted the critical role of Member States' feedback, including on the monthly reports issued by the Secretariat during the lifespan of UNMEER and in the context of relevant budgetary review processes, in guiding the Mission's efforts to adjust and improve its response to the changing situation on the ground.

51. High-level leadership at the national and international levels had been critical in mobilizing the necessary financial and human resources to scale up the Mission's response. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola had also played an important role in ensuring coherence in response strategies; facilitating the exchange of information among responders; mobilizing resources; and providing continuity in the response by facilitating a smooth transition from UNMEER to its successor, the Inter-agency Collaboration on Ebola. The high degree of inter-agency and cross-department collaboration demanded by the crisis had required effective executive management, and direct access to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General had enabled the Mission's leadership and the Office of the Special Envoy on Ebola to escalate urgent issues for immediate decision-making, intervention and advocacy. Respondents had also highlighted the effective role played by Ebola Crisis Managers at the country level

and the importance of tailoring leadership profiles to operational requirements, which had been reflected in the changes in Mission leadership in line with the requirements of the distinct phases of the outbreak. UNMEER had been expected to provide the operational framework to harness and support the integration of functions performed across the United Nations system, on the basis of comparative advantage and mandated responsibility. In that regard, the Mission had been found to be much more effective in a facilitating role than in an implementing or technical role. Its regional dimension had also allowed it to fill critical gaps in the response at the regional level.

52. The feedback on the structure and coordinating role of the Mission had been less positive. Respondents had criticized the command-and-control approach adopted in the initial stage of deployment, during which the Mission had been perceived as too static and too focused on establishing its organizational apparatus. Once UNMEER had reoriented itself to play a greater coordination role, it had been in a better position to leverage existing mechanisms, capacities and economies of scale, as well as to elicit the buy-in from partners required to provide effective operational direction. In that regard, respondents had recognized that the need for centralized decision-making and command, on the one hand, and for coordination, on the other, were not mutually exclusive. They had also emphasized the importance of building on existing coordination mechanisms and using familiar terminology, in order to ensure integration with actors already on the ground and facilitate continuity in the response.

53. Although necessary owing to the restrictions on air travel to the affected countries, the designation of Accra as the headquarters of UNMEER had contributed to the Mission's perceived detachment from operational decision-making in the affected areas. UNMEER had become more adept at tailoring its presence to actual operational needs in the second stage of deployment, when it had reallocated resources and capacities from headquarters to the affected countries.

54. The Mission had been intended as a temporary measure, as indicated in the letters dated 17 September 2014 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (A/69/389-S/2014/679). In that connection, the lessons learned exercise had highlighted the need for greater understanding, within the United Nations system, of the importance of incorporating and communicating a systemic exit strategy from the outset of an operation to ensure that there were no gaps in the transition and handover to United Nations country teams.

55. The urgency of the operation and the safety threats presented by the situation had posed a number of challenges for delivering support. In particular, in spite of the special measures established to facilitate recruitment and deployment, the Mission had initially struggled to identify and deploy personnel with the specialized skill sets required, which had highlighted the importance of implementing an effective staffing strategy that focused on targeting recruitment efforts to capacity gaps on the basis of an assessment of comparative advantages. Owing to the impact of the outbreak on national systems, inadequate capacities to support in-country medical treatment or medical evacuation had also affected the deployment of personnel. Facilitating the mobility of staff and other responders within the region to ensure targeted coverage of the affected areas had likewise proven challenging, despite the critical role played by air operations in that regard. He expressed confidence that the audit of UNMEER expenditures being conducted by the Board of Auditors would provide the Assembly with assurances regarding the Mission's use of resources and the final drawdown of its operations.

56. UNMEER had been created to provide the logistics backbone and crisis management capacity needed to deliver a unified response to the Ebola crisis. While respondents to the lessons learned exercise had stressed the need for improvements to the Mission's structure and implementation of its mandate, they had recognized the value of the concept of UNMEER and the strategic benefits that it had provided to the response in terms of leadership, facilitation, logistics support and availability of assessed funding. Moreover, there was support for the future establishment of a more streamlined model that leveraged existing capacities and coordination mechanisms while capitalizing on the benefits afforded by a United Nations mission model in terms of emergency response capacity. Lastly, the exercise was not intended to detract from the heroic contributions of United Nations entities and personnel, but rather to provide effective guidance for addressing future crises.

57. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/810), said that the findings of the lessons learned exercise highlighted the need to support local actors on the ground rather than assuming responsibility for their tasks; establish a country-level presence and mission structures that were tailored to the specific needs of each country; strengthen capacity

at the district level; and enhance coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities on the ground. Many of the issues identified during the exercise had been raised by the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the initial budgetary proposals for UNMEER.

58. In view of the compressed timeline for achieving the Mission's operational targets, which had been framed in terms of goals to be attained over 30-day, 60-day and 90-day periods, the Advisory Committee had questioned the need for the large organizational structure proposed for UNMEER, which had appeared to be modelled on the requirements of a more typical field operation with a long-term perspective; the rationale for establishing a large presence at the Mission's headquarters rather than in the affected countries; the reason why the functions of the Special Representative and Head of UNMEER could not have been performed by an incumbent at the Assistant Secretary-General level, under the strategic guidance of the Special Envoy on Ebola; and the reason why existing institutional arrangements, such as the framework for emergency humanitarian assistance adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, had not been used. The Advisory Committee had also stressed the need to promote cooperation among United Nations system entities and strengthen existing inter-agency capacities rather than creating new structures.

59. Overall, the approach taken in establishing UNMEER had not been thoroughly analysed or fully justified, and had resulted in resources being expended on administrative structures rather than operational activities. In addition, the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/737) did not provide the detailed information requested by the General Assembly on the final performance, liquidation and disposal of the assets of the Mission and the Office of the Special Envoy. The Advisory Committee would return to that issue at the time of its consideration of the report of the Board of Auditors on the financial statements of the United Nations for 2016, which would include the Board's findings on UNMEER expenditures.

60. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, at the height of the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the spread of the virus had quickly outpaced the capacity of individual countries and regional and international health organizations, particularly the World Health Organization (WHO), to respond to the crisis. Uncertainty, fear and inadequate capacity and preparedness had led to an ineffective and delayed initial response.

61. The Group appreciated the catalytic role of UNMEER in mobilizing the human and financial resources required for an effective response and in bolstering national operational response capacity in the affected countries. The availability of immediate and flexible funding was essential for filling critical gaps and building synergies among responders. In that regard, she noted with appreciation the efforts of the Office of the Special Envoy to mobilize extrabudgetary resources through the Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, as well as the contributions provided by a wide range of international partners.

62. The reports of the Secretary-General (A/70/737) and the Advisory Committee (A/71/810) highlighted a number of challenges encountered in the response effort, including initial confusion regarding allocation of responsibilities; inefficiencies in the use of new mechanisms, which had resulted in loss of time; ineffective community engagement; and the need for proper logistical coordination. When responding to health crises, it was critical to build upon existing institutional and coordination mechanisms, in collaboration with entities already on the ground, such as WHO, United Nations country teams and the African Union. In addition, it was essential to support local actors on the ground rather than assuming responsibility for their tasks; strengthen capacity at the district level; strengthen coordination among entities and support the involvement of implementing partners; and avoid duplicative solutions and structures. Regional organizations had also played a key role in raising awareness of the outbreak and mobilizing political and financial support from countries in the region and the continent in solidarity with the affected countries.

63. In an increasingly interconnected world with porous borders crossed by millions each day, no country was immune from a disease outbreak. The Group therefore hoped that the lessons learned from the activities of UNMEER would guide Member States and the United Nations system in responding to future global health crises.

64. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, noted with appreciation the efforts of UNMEER to mobilize the resources needed to scale up the international response to the Ebola outbreak. The objective of the lessons learned exercise had been to provide feedback and broader insight into how the United Nations system had collectively managed the response. The Group shared the views of

the Advisory Committee with regard to the organizational aspects of UNMEER, including its comments on the lack of coordination and collaboration among entities, the lack of effective support for local actors and issues related to mandate implementation.

65. The ineffective initial response to the outbreak had contributed to the spread of the disease. In that regard, the lessons learned exercise should have emphasized the need to build resilience to protect populations; strengthen the capacities of Member States in cooperation with the broader United Nations system; and establish preventive measures to avoid future crises. In the future, the Organization should establish a global centre for emergency preparedness and response with regional and local chapters; provide support for strengthening the health sector in vulnerable Member States, in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda; strengthen global coordination mechanisms; and avoid reducing the level of resources allocated to the health sector.

66. *Mr. Burity (Angola), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

Information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations (A/71/400 and A/71/785)

67. **Ms. Riazi** (Chief Information Technology Officer), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the ICT strategy for the United Nations (A/71/400), said that the strategy was a five-year plan to transform the technology environment at the United Nations in support of the Organization's work in core areas. Its primary aim was to harmonize, modernize and strategically rationalize information technology resources across the Secretariat to address the chronic fragmentation of the Organization's systems.

68. In 2016, the Office of Information and Communications Technology had made significant progress in implementing the strategy, including through providing critical support for the deployment of Umoja. It had also strengthened its collaboration with other departments, in particular by working with the Department of Field Support in preparing the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the Office (ST/SGB/2016/11); implementing the 10-point action plan to strengthen information security; and consolidating ICT infrastructure into the enterprise data centres operated by the Department in Brindisi, Italy and Valencia, Spain. The Office had conducted a detailed review of ICT spending and had developed a five-year budget projection. It had also issued 38 policies governing ICT management with a view to bolstering oversight and accountability. In addition, it had deployed new ICT systems to support the Organization's work in the areas of environmental protection; gender statistics; the prevention of drug trafficking and money laundering; financial intelligence and strategic planning; conference management support; news and media analysis; learning management; management of fuel and contingent-owned equipment; and various administrative areas.

69. Thanks to the coordinated governance of the enterprise application centres, 2,340 applications had been reduced to 1,652 between 2014 and 2016, and the implementation of the Exchange/Office 365 hybrid project would result in the retirement of 780 additional legacy systems. Those accomplishments marked the essential completion of the modernization and transformation stages of the strategy, which would contribute to leveraging the full potential of technology in support of the Organization's core work and pave the way for the innovation phase. Nevertheless, continuing difficulties in consolidating ICT resources were contributing to redundant investment in solutions and the creation of organizational silos as a result of the deployment of systems without adherence to established governance. There was also a need to invest in upgrades in key areas, including infrastructure, with a view to deploying innovative solutions. Lastly, the lack of visibility of ICT resources and programmes hindered efforts to strengthen information security across the Secretariat.

70. In 2017, efforts would be made to direct necessary reinvestment toward technological solutions that supported effective mandate delivery in field operations, including innovative technologies in the areas of camp security, convoy protection, situational awareness and the promotion of a common operating vision. While new technologies reached developing countries faster than ever before, they were not necessarily accessible to the majority of people in those countries. A global multi-stakeholder approach was therefore needed in order to bring together technology, people, organizations and programmes under a coordinated framework in support of development at the global, regional and national levels.

71. Although challenges remained in their implementation, the Office's strategic initiatives, including the consolidation of disparate networks and data centres and the harmonization of global sourcing, had the potential to deliver long-term cost optimization benefits. The progress achieved in the first two years of implementation of the ICT strategy was a positive step

toward ensuring the comprehensive, reliable and efficient provision of ICT services throughout the Organization.

72. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/785), welcomed the progress made in implementing the ICT strategy, particularly the issuance of the long-overdue bulletin of the Secretary-General (ST/SGB/2016/11); the improved collaboration between the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Field Support; the establishment of a single, harmonized wide-area network for the United Nations Secretariat; the operationalization of the enterprise application centres and replacement of legacy applications with new, standard enterprise applications; and the inclusion of peacekeeping requirements in the five-year budget projection for the Secretariat.

73. With regard to organizational arrangements, the Advisory Committee expected all Secretariat departments and entities to comply with the ICT strategy, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/262, and with the provisions of the Secretary-General's bulletin. It was also critical to ensure that budgets for all ICT activities were reviewed by the Office before their submission to the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts. In addition, the Advisory Committee stressed the need to achieve all milestones in mainstreaming Umoja and to strengthen in-house capacity in order to ensure a smooth and timely transfer of responsibilities to enable the institutionalization of Umoja support.

74. Departments should ensure that the necessary information security reviews were conducted and that mandatory training was completed by all staff to guarantee the timely completion of the 10-point information security action plan. Future progress reports on the strategy's implementation should include a brief update on the achievements of the regional ICT services of the Department of Field Support in order to provide a comprehensive picture of regional ICT activities. With regard to enterprise application centres, the Secretary-General should strive to further rationalize and reduce the 1,000 applications that were expected to remain in 2020. Lastly, the managers of all Secretariat entities must collaborate with a view to overcoming resistance to efforts to reduce fragmentation and consolidate ICT capacities, as well as in implementing the ICT strategy. The Advisory Committee expected the Secretary-General to exercise strong leadership in that regard.

75. **Mr. Sevilla Borja** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group supported management reforms designed to increase efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, oversight and accountability at the United Nations.

76. The ICT strategy was a pragmatic step towards responding to concerns related to ICT. While progress had been made in strengthening information security and reducing fragmentation and costs related to the deployment of security and monitoring measures, it would be essential to ensure the completion of the 10-point information security action plan. That would allow the Organization to, inter alia, address potential security risks and disaster recovery issues through strong governance mechanisms and to protect itself against mass surveillance, interception and collection of communications and data. The Group would seek further information on the determination made with regard to which ICT activities required central control and which merited operational freedom, as well as details relating to the budget preparation process and implementation of the ICT strategy.

77. The regular budget resources, including resources for special political missions, appropriated for ICT had decreased from $368.1 million for the biennium 2014-2015 to $354.0 million for the biennium 2016-2017. The resources from peacekeeping budgets, including the support account, available for ICT programmes had decreased from $1,002.4 million during the biennium 2014-2015 to $991.8 million during the biennium 2016-2017, while the extrabudgetary resources for such programmes had increased from $26.6 million for the biennium 2014-2015 to $27.0 million for the biennium 2016-2017.

78. The distribution of ICT resources in peacekeeping missions had remained consistent over the previous three fiscal periods: post resources had accounted for approximately 30 per cent; non-post resources, which had been distributed across the equipment category of expenditure, had accounted for 32 per cent; and 38 per cent had been allocated for services, commercial communications and software-related costs. In that regard, the Secretary-General should continue his efforts to reduce the average ICT cost per user through achieving economies of scale and to strengthen capacity-building programmes for staff members, including in peacekeeping missions. The Group would seek further details on the share of the annual Umoja maintenance costs managed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology, which were estimated at $34.9 million and $34.4 million during the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years, respectively. It also concurred with the

recommendation contained in the Advisory Committee's related report from 2016 (A/70/755) that all ICT projects or initiatives with total costs starting from a specified threshold level should be supported by a business case with a level of detail commensurate with the size of the project. The Group would therefore request a list of all ongoing and future ICT initiatives, together with their corresponding costs, benchmarks and deliverables, in order to measure their performance.

79. Acknowledging the improved collaboration between the Office and the Department of Field Support, the Group nevertheless called for greater cooperation between peacekeeping and non-peacekeeping entities on ICT matters. The Group also encouraged the Secretary-General to enhance system-wide collaboration and called on the heads of United Nations entities to consider encouraging the harmonization and sharing of ICT services, in particular at field locations, and to strengthen the ICT capacities of Member States in need of support. It would also be interested to hear more about efforts made by the Office to facilitate the work of the Organization and support Member States, including by providing ICT services to their representatives at all main duty stations.

80. The Group would seek further information regarding the use of systems contracts and enterprise agreements, particularly in the context of local and regional procurement; monitoring of intangible assets management; conformity with procurement rules and regulations; and the implementation of the innovation phase of the ICT strategy. All proposed policy changes to enhance career development opportunities for ICT staff or retain experienced and qualified ICT personnel must be presented for consideration by the General Assembly in the context of the Secretary-General's report on human resources management. Lastly, the Secretary-General must ensure the full implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on ICT matters.

81. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendations and observations on the report of the Secretary-General. As ICT resources were utilized in all aspects of the Organization's work, it was imperative to mainstream related strategies and utilization plans, and to expedite the implementation of reforms aimed at increasing efficiency, effectiveness and transparency at the United Nations. The Group was therefore concerned that the General Assembly's decisions endorsing the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors on ICT matters were often implemented with delays or remained unimplemented. All managers must renew their commitment to complying with those recommendations in order to accelerate the implementation of the ICT strategy.

82. The Group took note of the finalization of internal policies and procedures for formalizing designation and delegation of authority in the area of ICT. To ensure the strategy's successful implementation, efforts must be made to strengthen coordination and harmonization, particularly in peacekeeping and special political missions; improve information security with a view to preventing potential security risks; and enhance procurement. The Group looked forward to learning more about the projected expenditures related to those activities, as well as the share of annual Umoja maintenance costs managed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology. It would also be interested to learn more about procurement and management of ICT services, particularly at the local and regional levels, and steps taken to improve the ratio of contracts managed at those levels.

83. The Group would seek further clarification with regard to the steps envisaged by the Secretariat to meet the growing demand for ICT services, as well as an assessment of further investments needed, inter alia, to support the use of videoconferencing services. It also looked forward to examining detailed proposals for an effective and coherent application development strategy designed to eliminate redundant and obsolete applications and reduce fragmentation. Lastly, the Group encouraged the Secretary-General to strengthen capacity-building programmes for staff members, using in-house capacity, and to provide peacekeeping missions with the ICT tools needed to implement their mandates.

84. **Ms. Grant** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that ICT played a key role in facilitating the Organization's work by strengthening communication; improving the responsiveness of its global workforce; and promoting efficient sharing of accurate information to support decision-making and enhance oversight and accountability.

85. The European Union welcomed the progress made in implementing the ICT strategy, including the work done to consolidate fragmented systems; improve

service delivery by delegating competencies; rationalize applications and ICT centres; strengthen governance; and support the implementation of Umoja. Her delegation also welcomed the enhanced coordination between the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Field Support, and the clarity provided by the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2016/11) with regard to the allocation of responsibilities for ICT.

86. A number of challenges must be tackled to ensure the successful implementation of the ICT strategy. Robust policies aimed at strengthening governance and focusing investment on service delivery, particularly in the area of cybersecurity, would be essential for optimizing resource utilization and capitalizing on the value of ICT assets and investments. The continued leadership of managers across all Secretariat entities would be critical in that regard. In addition, further progress could be made to enhance oversight over procurement, management of assets and human resources for ICT to avoid duplication and ensure the efficient, flexible and transparent use of resources throughout the Organization.

87. **Ms. Baumann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that Member States had adopted the ICT strategy with the aim of reducing fragmentation in the ICT environment; strengthening central leadership of ICT systems; establishing effective governance; improving information security; and increasing transparency. As a result of the progress achieved, the ICT infrastructure and architecture were running more smoothly; improvements were being made to operations and service delivery; new ICT policies were in place; critical support had been provided for the deployment of Umoja; systems were more secure; and the enterprise application help desk had been fully established. She particularly welcomed the efforts made to improve collaboration between peacekeeping and non-peacekeeping entities on ICT matters.

88. In addressing remaining challenges, the Secretary-General must foster deeper coordination and collaboration within the Organization and ensure the full support and commitment of senior management. The two delegations also shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General should continue to reduce the level of fragmentation in the ICT environment across the Secretariat and at all duty stations and field missions and to strengthen inter-department collaboration. Efforts should be made to mainstream Umoja within the overall ICT strategy and architecture, in particular by establishing a unified system for Umoja support, including in peacekeeping entities, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248 A. Lastly, she urged Member States to encourage the harmonization and sharing of ICT services with other United Nations entities, in particular at field locations, in line with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 69/262.

89. **Mr. Wax** (Israel) said that Israel supported the ICT strategy, which would assist the Organization in its efforts to keep apace of ongoing technological developments, achieve administrative and financial efficiencies, and fulfil its mandates.

90. Implementing the strategy effectively would require more than simply incorporating new technology and understanding the need for innovation. Such technology must be applied and utilized correctly, which would entail providing adequate training and maintaining dedicated ICT personnel to harness the full potential of advanced systems. In that regard, trainers must have the necessary skill set to provide United Nations staff with the guidance they required to operate new systems. Digital solutions would also allow off-site personnel to have access to information in the field, thereby enhancing their mobility. In that connection, he welcomed the examples of innovative applications of ICT provided in the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/400).

91. Senior management must ensure that new systems were utilized optimally in order to achieve the efficiencies and cost reductions envisaged under the ICT strategy. In that regard, the Organization must complete the transition from a localized to a cloud-based approach to ICT management in order to reduce duplication of work, while bearing in mind the need to enhance cybersecurity preparedness to safeguard its information and provide a secure working environment.

92. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that all Secretariat departments should comply fully with the ICT strategy, working together with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to eliminate duplicate systems. While it was important to assess whether the strategy was being applied in an appropriate manner, Member States must avoid inadvertently blocking vital ICT reforms needed to implement new strategies and fulfil mandates.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.